

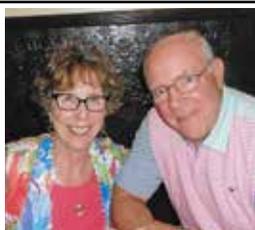
SHALOM

The Journal of the Reading Jewish Community. Published as a community service by the Jewish Federation of Reading, Pa.

Volume 47, No. 3

MARCH 2017

ADAR-NISAN 5777



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2017 totals as of Feb. 16
Jewish Community Campaign \$192,030
**Includes transfers from Donor Advised Funds*



Remembering Albert Boscov

Albert Boscov will be remembered as one of the most beloved members not just of the Reading Jewish community but of the entire region and beyond. Since his death at the age of 87 in February, tributes have been pouring in from every city where he did business. But members of our community are among those who knew him best. In honor of his tremendous accomplishments as a businessman, philanthropist and humanitarian, we have gathered their thoughts and reminiscences of their time with this remarkable individual. Look inside for six pages of coverage.

Purim fun abounds throughout community

Purim kicks off Saturday, March 4, with the Federation's **Purim Masquerade Party** at Stokesay Castle. This affair featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres, drinks, desserts, music and dancing.

All community members 21 and older are invited to join the fun. Cocktail attire is requested and masks are encouraged. Noelle & Jeff Band of Maryland will play current and classic hits. The cost is \$40 per person or \$75 per couple.

Please RSVP immediately to 610-921-0624.

Purim Carnival

JFR is bringing some magic to this year's Purim Carnival! Magician Eddy Ray will be on hand to keep kids of all ages laughing, smiling and enjoying themselves to his magic. His show is packed full of comedy, audience interaction, amazing magic and pure FUN!

Join us on Sunday, March 12, at 4 p.m. at the JCC for the free magic show! Stay for carnival fare including hot dogs, popcorn, hamantaschen and other treats for a small fee.

RSVP requested to Brenda: brendas@jfreading.org or 610-921-0624 by March 10.

Megillah reading, party at Keshet Zion

Keshet Zion Synagogue will host a Megillah reading followed by a party Saturday, March 11, at 7 p.m. at the JCC. There will be hamantaschen, drinks, prizes for costumes and karaoke.

An additional Megillah reading will take place Sunday, March 12, at 9:30 a.m., also at the JCC. Hamantaschen and drinks will be served.

Please RSVP to 610-374-1763 or kzsecretary@entermail.net.

Purim Spiel and dinner at RCOS

Get ready for great food, great fellowship and great fun! On Saturday, March 11 starting at 6:30 p.m., Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom is having its Second Annual Purim Spiel. This is your last chance to RSVP (by March 3) for this highly entertaining holiday celebration! Those of you who didn't attend last year's spiel missed out on a terrific event. Those of you who came last year know what to expect, and are probably wondering how the merry band of RCOS players can possibly top last year's memorable production. Don't worry — they will.

Instead of a traditional megilla reading in the sanctuary, the RCOS Purim Spiel will be held in the Temple social hall. After an Italian dinner,

Continued on Page 4

Meir Panim to run Israel's Food Security Initiative

Meir Panim, a relief organization that provides food and services to Israel's poor, is about to embark on one of its most important projects to date. It has been awarded a government funded program called Food Security Initiative, which began in February in the southern town of Dimona.

According to a recent report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), more Israeli's are living below the poverty line than in any other member country. This means that for hundreds of thousands of working Israelis, their salaries are often not enough to feed their families.

The Food Security Initiative is a joint effort between Meir Panim, Leket Israel and Eshel Yerushalayim. It is designed to help feed needy families in the Jewish State. The

program distributes prepaid food shopping cards that can be used in many major supermarket chains as well as food and fruit baskets on a bimonthly basis to those who need.

The goal of the program is to bring a sense of food security to people who often wonder where their next meal will come from. Over the course of the year, each family will receive about \$1,700 worth of food.

In the mid-1990's, Israel's poverty rate was just above 14 percent. It has since risen to a staggering 21 percent. One of the contributing factors is the drastic rise of food prices over the past two decades. Over that same period, the average salary has remained relatively stable, creating an increase in the percentage of working poor.

According to Nissim Almakayes, director of Meir Panim's Dimona branch, the Food Security Initiative will help several hundred residents of the struggling development towns of Dimona and neighboring Yeruchum acquire food in a dignified manner.

Almakayes explained that people registered for the Food Security Initiative will be able to come to the Meir Panim Dimona branch every other week and receive a prepaid food shopping card worth about \$70. The card looks like a standard credit card in order to avoid potential embarrassment to its recipients who do not want to advertise that they are accepting charity.

In addition to the shopping card, people will receive a basket of nutritious food for their home. This food

basket will include essentials such as bread, oil, sugar, fruits, vegetables and other necessities.

Meir Panim maintains six branches in major cities around the country. While the Food Security Initiative is funded by the government, Meir Panim generally relies on donations to provide poor people the help they need. Before the Food Security Initiative, Meir Panim had already distributed over 100,000 food baskets to needy families throughout Israel. Some of their other programs include the daily serving of meals at their restaurant-style soup kitchens and running after-school programs for needy children.

Meir Panim's efforts are supported by local dollars through the Israel Now campaign of the Jewish Federation of Reading.

Creating your Jewish legacy

By **Richard Nassau**
Development Director

My good friend has multiple generations of his family stored in his phone. Not just the standard pictures of his kids, but the results of his research into his family's genealogy. I saw photos and charts and pictures of his long-ago relatives. I heard stories of visits to cemeteries and libraries and homes of distant cousins. He is a good storyteller, and it was good to be with him as he now lives in the Midwest. However, it was his reply to my question of how his grandparents met that really caught my attention. He simply said without background or lengthy story, "B'nai Brith."



What a statement that is. Think for a moment about how your grandparents met and how about your great-grandparents? Is it a simple story? Is there a Jewish component? Does it

make a statement about their values, the times, or their legacy and hopes for you?

My friend's reply motivated me to do a little research. I started digging around and did find a few skeletons, no surprise. What I also rediscovered was my grandfather, who I never considered to be "religious" however you interpret that word, led and founded a synagogue where one had never existed.

What a statement that is. Conveying values through actions crosses generations.

Last year, I along with 17 others, chose to make a statement through our actions. Each of us chose to participate in the Create a Jewish Legacy program. Each of us signed a Letter of Intent indicating our desire to leave a legacy for the Jewish community. The Letter, while not binding, is a statement of values.

It is important to remember that signing a Letter of Intent or creating a Jewish legacy is not done apart from your family. You can create your legacy in ways that will meet all the needs of your family and still accomplish your

charitable goals.

Consider joining with others in our community who have signed a Letter of Intent. Creating your Jewish legacy is a loud and clear statement you can make today about the future and the importance of the Jewish community. It is a statement that will be heard by children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

The values of your grandparents and other family members were many times expressed through their actions. The choices they made, many times in a Jewish context, were statements about their hopes for you and the future, and the importance of belonging to a community.

Jewish tradition asks us to tell the story of the man who plants a tree knowing the fruit would only be there for future generations. When we create a Jewish legacy, we are securing a future Jewish community with flourishing programs. A community with the resources to provide for future needs — emergencies, new initiatives and services. Jewish legacies benefit synagogues, programs, and

organizations.

I'm not sure my children always listen to me. They have heard and know how important our Jewish community is to me. They also know I've taken actions through my will to express my Jewish values. It is statement future generations will also hear.

Think back one last time to your grandparent and others in your family tree. It is thanks to their foresight and other family members in past generations that we are able to have a vibrant and strong Jewish community here in Berks County. A community in which I promise you they looked ahead. Their hopes can be seen today when we come together to celebrate our heritage and traditions and when we support each other at those times when it is most needed.

Please consider creating your Jewish legacy.

To learn more about creating your Jewish legacy, contact me at richardn@jfreeding.org or call Jewish Federation of Reading 610-921-0624 to arrange a confidential discussion.

Program focuses on Jewish risk of breast, ovarian cancer

On Sunday April 2, the Jewish Federation Maimonides Society will present a program for health care professionals, What's Jewish About Breast Cancer and Ovarian Cancer. The program features Melissa K. Rosen from Sharsheret and is being co-sponsored by the McGlinn Cancer Institute of Reading Health System and Breast Cancer Support Services of Berks County.

The program begins at 10:30 am on the Penn State Berks campus. There is no cost, but preregistration is required.

The program is an opportunity for health care professionals to learn about the issues and concerns of Jewish women and families facing breast cancer and ovarian cancer. The hourlong program will cover topics that include cultural issues, community and privacy concerns, genetic concerns and the unique challenges faced by single and married women.

Ashkenazi Jews have a 10 times higher rate of mutations that increase the risk of breast and ovarian cancer in women. These mutations also increase a man's risk of developing breast and prostate cancer. Recent studies show that Sephardic Jews may also be genetically predisposed to hereditary breast and ovarian cancer. The hereditary risk is in no way diminished if a person no

longer identifies with the Jewish community.

Rosen's professional experience includes informal education, advocacy and community outreach. Her work includes facilitating connections among organizations in the American Jewish community. She also oversees outreach efforts throughout the country, connecting as many as possible to the support and resources of Sharsheret. As a breast cancer survivor, she is passionate about the Jewish community and cancer support and advocacy.

The Maimonides Society of the Jewish Federation of Reading sponsors programs for the community and Society members throughout the year. Led by Dr. David Sacks, the Society brings together Jewish medical professionals who continue the tradition of tikkun olam – healing the world. Members of Reading's Maimonides Society integrate Jewish values with community medical needs helping to improve the lives of people here at home, in Israel and around the world.

Sharsheret, Hebrew for "chain", is a national not-for-profit organization that supports young women and families, of all Jewish backgrounds, facing breast cancer, at every stage – before, during and after diagnosis.

Maimonides Society presents:
What's Jewish About Breast Cancer and Ovarian Cancer

Free and open to all healthcare professionals.

Sunday April 2, 10:30 am
Penn State Berks Campus
2080 Tulpehocken Road, Spring Township
Preregistration is required.

*Register online www.readingjewishcommunity.org
Or call Brenda at 610-921-0624
Or by email to BrendaS@JFReading.org*

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From the President's Desk

The importance of a strong community

By William D. Franklin
President

I just returned from Brooklyn having visited family and making a Shiva call to Rabbi Lipsker and his family. The presence of a caring community at his parents' home reinforced the value



and meaning of the Community Shabbat we had celebrated the weekend before.

On one level, the gathering of more than 150 people from RCOS, KZ, Chabad, college students and seniors to pray, sing, eat and talk together was a wonderful shared community event.

But the importance and value of community was reinforced by Rabbi Lipsker and his father.

On Friday morning, at his father's hospital bedside, Rabbi Lipsker asked what he should do. His heart and mind were torn- he wanted to stay with his father but also wanted to be at our Community Shabbat. His father, Rabbi Eliyahu Lipsker, told him that it was important to return to Reading and help lead our Community Shabbat. Our Rabbi did so and led services Friday evening, Saturday morning and ended with a Tu B'Shevat Seder — not knowing the condition of his father.

Yet he joined us singing, schmoozing and connecting with all who were

present. A sweet and most touching moment was when Rabbi Lipsker's son Ari, seeing his father's pain and anxiety, came over, gave him a hug and sat with him.

Rabbi Lipsker rushed back to Brooklyn late Saturday evening and was able to have four days with his father before he died. Thus, the Shiva call. In Brooklyn, Rabbi Lipsker was surrounded by family and friends. His other community had come together to comfort and support him in his time of need. Within a week, it was striking to observe one community coming together to celebrate Shabbat and Tu B'Shevat and another, caring and consoling, at one of the life's saddest moments.

This is why community building is such an important Jewish value. It is the reason we have survived for over 3,000 years of violence and anti-Semitism. It is why we work hard, here in Reading, to have programs that attract, educate and enhance Jewish life in the Reading community.

Please join us in the month of March at our Purim party, our 'Right vs. Left' debate, the movie "The Sturgeon Queens" and the Yashek Lecture on antisemitism. We continue to invest in nurturing and developing the Jewishness of our community.

Join us also as our community remembers Albert Boscov's great life.

Singing was highlight of Community Shabbat

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Reflecting back on this year's Community Shabbat, I think of singing. From the fabulous voices of White Shabbas, who led the service with their singing and then continued singing for the crowd during dinner, to the sweet voices of our youngest community members from the Lakin Preschool, voices raised in song were heard all evening.

Despite the snow on the ground, the Chabad Center was beautiful in green with fresh fruit as the centerpieces. A special fruit display with dessert was another highlight, since the dinner was held on Erev Tu B'Shevat. The crowd of more than 150 people enjoyed the event, with most staying late in the evening enjoying conversations and songs!

Special thanks to Chabad for hosting the community and Rabbi Yosef and Chana Lipsker for their hard work in preparing for the event.



Photos taken before the Community Shabbat capture the beauty of the decorations.

Yemin Orde working to spread its successful Village Way

In 2006, Israel's Ministry of Education urged Yemin Orde Youth Village to expand its unique and successful circle of care to thousands of other youth at-risk throughout Israel and, consequently, Yemin Orde's Village Way Educational Initiatives was launched. The Initiatives directly impact Israel's struggling youth village populations by providing teacher training, workshops, interventions and other special programs. Its innovative "Village Way" methodologies are designed to enhance the spiritual well-being, character development and leadership potential of first-generation Israelis who come from poverty-stricken families and broken homes.

The Village Way's resources

and training through its Derech Kfar (Village Way) Educational Institute are widely praised throughout Israel as a model of educational excellence. Its methodologies are integrated into university-level education courses and in Israel's public school system, including schools in the Israeli-Arab communities.

The Village Way is working with 26 educational communities in Israel — 10 Ministry of Education youth villages; 13 public high schools; and three Ministry of Welfare therapeutic residential schools

The Village Way Educational Initiatives also launched two pre-military leadership programs for immigrant youth.

Since beginning the program, the Village Way has reached more than



9,650 children and 1,320 staff members.

Two leading colleges in Israel are teaching the Village Way methodology in undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Outside Israel, the Village Way has assisted and inspired other projects for at-risk children in such diverse places as Rwanda and San Diego.

Yemin Orde's Village Way Educational Initiatives is ready for the next phase of its expansion. Its methodology has proved itself an effective and relevant educational and

life skills tool in theory and in practice in a variety of settings.

Village Way leadership is pursuing the possibility of working with an entire town's education system (1,200 children) and is working with a public high school in an Israeli-Arab community. Village Way Educational Initiatives is an independent entity supported through the fundraising efforts of Friends of Yemin Orde.

Meir Panim is supported by local dollars through the Jewish Federation of Reading's Israel Now campaign.

SHALOM

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The opinions expressed in Shalom are of the writers and not the Jewish Federation of Reading

Next deadline, March 5

Reading Jewish Film Series continues into spring

By Amanda J. Hornberger

The Reading Jewish Film Series continues with the charming feel-good documentary "The Sturgeon Queens," about the family behind the counter of Russ & Daughters in New York. The film traces four generations of Russ family history to learn the delicious story of the famed lox and herring emporium on the Lower East Side. "The Sturgeon Queens" will be shown on Wednesday, March 1, at 7 p.m. at FOX EAST, 4350 Perkiomen Ave., Exeter Township, (next to Boscov's East).

On April 5, we'll present a double feature in conjunction with the Islamic Center of Reading. We'll begin with the documentary short "Women in Sink," a British-Israeli film set over the washing basin of a little Arab hair salon in Haifa.

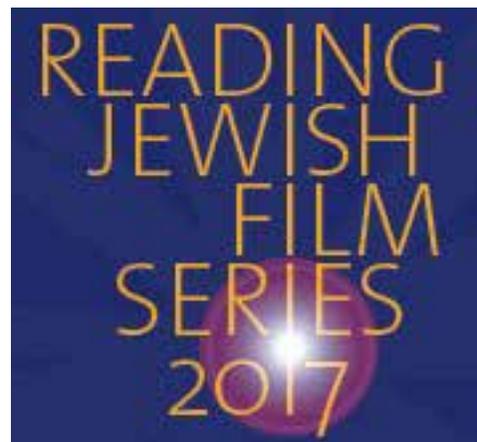
Both Arab and Jewish women frequent the salon and chat with the director (who is shampooing their hair!) about politics and love.

Second in the double feature, the American documentary "In Search of Israeli Cuisine" will play. The film is a portrait of the Israeli people told through food. The film's chef/guide is Michael Solomonov, a James Beard Award winning chef and co-owner of acclaimed Zahav in Philadelphia. The filmmakers follow Mike into hot restaurants and home kitchens, wineries and cheese makers, street food vendors and markets. The food traditions are incredible diverse — Moroccan, Persian, Lebanese, French, Italian, and Russian; Jewish, Arab, Palestinian, Christian, and Druze, kosher and non-kosher, secular and

religious. All over the country, he discusses traditions, ingredients, the origins, and the future of Israeli cuisine.

After the screening of the two films, there will be a facilitated discussion featuring members of the Islamic and Jewish communities. "Women in Sink" and "In Search of Israeli Cuisine" will be shown on Wednesday, April 5, at 6:30 p.m. at FOX EAST, 4350 Perkiomen Ave., Exeter Township (next to Boscov's East).

The 2017 Reading Jewish Film Series is co-sponsored by the Rubin Educational Fund of the Jewish Federation of Reading and Fox Theatres. Admission is \$5 per film. All films will be shown on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. at FOX EAST. Tickets can be purchased at the theater beginning at 6:30 p.m. the day of the screening, and



series tickets can be bought at the JCC. Cash and checks are accepted.

The final film in this year's series will be "Apples from the Desert," to be screened May 17.

ESCAPE: Spring art exhibit at the JCC opens March 9

By Amanda J. Hornberger

This spring ESCAPE at a new art exhibit at the JCC featuring paintings by Alita Abruzzese. An art teacher for more than 20 years Alita gained inspiration from the children and their fresh look at the world. Although her artwork is mostly representational, she does not just copy what she sees. Her goal is to capture the mood in each

scene, with nature and people as her favorite subjects.

Alita describes her show: "As I paint I get involved in my artwork. I escape the worries of my world for the moment. My hope is that by interacting with my artwork it also helps you to escape into a different world — a world of landscapes and seascapes that remind you of happy times, calmer times, and the beauty

around us. Perhaps it will bring you closer to a place you haven't yet been — Italy, Spain, The Grand Canyon, Newfoundland, or even a place around the corner. Perhaps it will bring you to a place in the corner

of your mind. Escape with me."

Join us for the art opening for ESCAPE on Thursday, March 9, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the JCC. Light refreshments will be served. The exhibit will run through May 26.

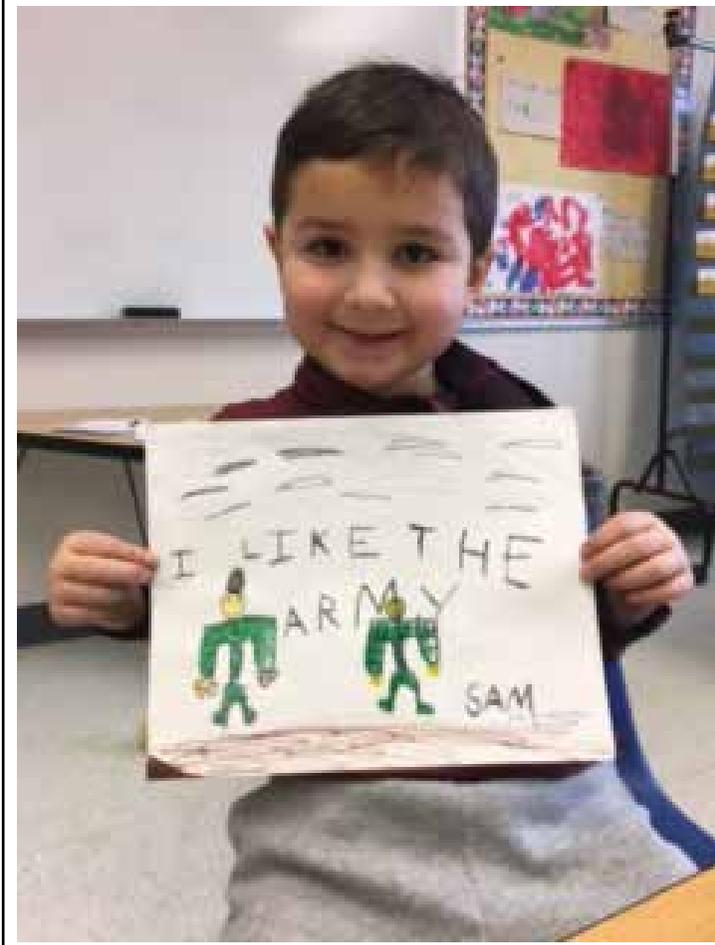
Woman with local ties killed in crash

Susan Hollingshead, my special and very beloved daughter-in-law was killed in an auto accident on the Florida Turnpike Feb. 1. She was driving and she was alone. Susan was 64. She is survived by her son Daniel Hollingshead, her mother, two brothers

and one sister. She was predeceased by her husband, James Mendelsohn. Memorial contributions may be made to the Jewish Family Service, P.O. Box 14925, Reading PA 19612 or a charity of your choice.

—Edith Mendelsohn

Honoring Israel's soldiers



Members of the kindergarten class at Lakin Preschool wrote letters to be delivered in Purim baskets to Israeli soldiers. Here student Samuel Weiss displays his handiwork

Obituary

Theodore Aarons, 96, formerly of Wyomissing. Theodore was a veteran of World War II, serving in the Army Air Corps. He was vice president of Thomas Body Parts until his retirement in 1985, he also served as Treasurer of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and was its Cemetery Committee

Chairman for many years. After retirement he worked for the Literacy Council of Berks County for more than 20 years. Theodore is survived by his wife, Annalee, and his children: son Louis and his wife, Connie Aarons, of Sinking Spring; and daughter Susan Herlinger of Philadelphia. Other survivors include his two grandchildren and one nephew.

PURIM

Continued from Page 1

the audience will be treated to a hysterical musical comedy retelling of the Book of Esther. Written and directed by Reading community theatre maven Mike Pardo, this mish-mosh of show tune and pop music parodies will have those in attendance falling on their tuchises in laughter. NOTE: No songs will be repeated from last year's spiel. Mike has come up with a whole new series of very funny parodies, making this year's production a totally new theatre experience!

Noisemakers will be provided to blot out the dreaded name of the evil villain, Haman. Members are also encouraged to come to the event in costume — either as their favorite Purim character or whoever else might tickle their fancy.

So, reserve the evening of March 11. Dinner will be served at 6:30. The Purim play will begin around 7 and should last

around 40 minutes. After that, of course, comes hamantashen. Since many people will be coming with young children, we're hoping to get everyone fed and entertained in time to return safely to their homes by 8:30. The play is G-rated and suitable for the entire family, so we're hoping to see everyone there! The spiel is open to RCOS members and nonmembers alike.

In order to defray the cost of food, a modest \$6 per person admission is being charged. Children 2 years of age and under are free. In keeping with the Purim tradition of tzedakah, \$1 per admission collected will be donated to Mazon, A Jewish Response to Hunger. To ensure there is enough food and seats, please RSVP by Friday, March 3, if you plan to attend. Please send a check for the total amount to the Temple office (555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing, PA 19610) and enclose a note that the money is for the March 11 Purim Event.

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Israel Book Club: Theodore Herzl's 'The Jewish State'

By **Moisey Schneider & Andi Franklin**

Theodore Herzl was the first to project the question of Jewish exile and anti-Semitism as an international problem. His book "The Jewish State" was written 50 years before the creation of the modern State of Israel. The book was the first public expression of a solution to this problem and proposed that the Jewish hope of 2,000 years could be fulfilled. His passionate advocacy of the founding of a Jewish state grew out of his conviction that Jews could never be assimilated into their local population. He concluded that the only solution for Jews would be organized emigration to a state of their own.

Herzl was familiar with the anti-Semitism of Austria and Germany. He had encountered anti-Semitism when at school and later as a newspaper correspondent in Paris. He wrote an article on the French anti-Semitism evident at the trial of Alfred Dreyfus as he witnessed the degradation of Dreyfus and heard the cries of "down with the Jews." This made him a Zionist.

The beginning of this Jewish renaissance preceded the appearance of his book by several decades. In every section of Russian Jewry there was an active Zionist life. Hebrew journals had a wide circulation. After Russian pogroms, the ideas of the first Zionists Pinsker, Smolenski, and Gordon were discussed everywhere. There were also many Zionist societies in Poland, Romania and even in the United States. However, with the advent of Herzl, Zionism became no more a matter of local Jewish discussion, but

now occupied a place on the international stage.

He saw a world in which the Jews lacked a fulcrum for national action and wrote a series of books among which was "The Jewish State." Herzl argued that, in vain we are loyal patriots, our loyalty running to extremes. In vain, we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow citizens. In vain, we strive to increase the fame of our native land in science, art and wealth. In countries where we have lived for centuries, we are considered to be and called strangers, often by those whose ancestors were not yet in the land when Jews were already suffering. He said everything tends, in fact to one, and the same conclusion which is clearly enunciated in that classic Berlin phase — "Judens Raus" (out with Jews). This book is not just a piece of literature but a political document to win converts, both Jews and non-Jews, to the idea of a Jewish state. It is also a blueprint of a structure by which to accomplish the state.

Herzl discussed the political and historic rationale for such a homeland in the book, arguing that this was not a social or religious question but a national one. The book articulated a plan to establish a Jewish state that was simple in design and would be carried out by two agencies: The Society of Jews and the Jewish Company. The Society of Jews became the World Zionist Organization and led to the first World Zionist Congress in Basel in August 1897, where Herzl told the delegates, "We are here to lay the foundation stone for

the house which will become the refuge of the Jewish nation." As a member of the Congress, Herzl showed how the idea of a Democratic Zionist movement depended on self-emancipation. Zionism had become an integral part of his life. His analysis of anti-Semitism and how to approach the problem was as true after Hitler as it was after Dreyfus. He believed that this tragedy is a world problem and that the homelessness of the Jewish people must come to an end. It could only be solved by the establishment of a free Jewish state in their historic homeland.

When "The Jewish State" was published, it was read by small circles in European capitals and translated into several languages. The German Jewish-controlled press was critical of the book. Herzl and his ideas were also rejected by the wealthy, the intellectuals and the political aristocracy. It was on the Jewish masses that Herzl made a tremendous impression. He was embraced by these Jews who saw him as a leader, who like Moses, would liberate the Jews. Herzl no longer felt that he was alone. The Jewish State evoked widespread interest. It brought Jews out of the ghettos and made them conscious of their origin and their destiny as a people on the way to freedom.

On his return from the Congress he wrote in his diary, "In Basel we created the Jewish State." He also wrote with great appreciation of the quality of the Russian delegates — "they possess the inner unity which has disappeared from among Westerners, in this way they manage to remain erect and

genuine." He warned his fellow Jews that "universal brotherhood is not even a beautiful dream. Antagonism is essential to man's greatest efforts." As he became less and less confident of the cooperation of wealthy Jews, he created the Jewish Colonial Bank to supply credit for settlers.

The plan in "The Jewish State" was not a dogmatic finality. Herzl knew and hoped that it was to be rewritten by the Jewish people on their way to freedom. It was revised from the moment the World Zionist Congress was organized as an international movement. Later, the Society of Jews became the Zionist Organization; the Jewish Company became the Bank, the Jewish Colonial Trust and finally the Anglo-Palestinian Bank.

Unfortunately, he was overly optimistic when he said, "the Jews, once settled in their own state, will probably have no more enemies and anti-Semitism will stop at once and forever."

But his predictions at the end of the book, for the most part, have come true:

"We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and die peacefully in our own homes.

"The world will be freed by our liberty, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness.

"And whatever we attempt there to accomplish for our own welfare, will react powerfully and beneficially for the good of humanity."

Our next book is "The Tail Wags the Dog" by Efraim Karsh. We hope you will join us.

Left vs. Right Debate at the JCC: Is peace in Israel possible

By **Amanda J. Hornberger**

Is Israel locked in a tragic dispute between two peoples claiming the same land — or a global conflict between Western democracy and Islamist terrorism? Is partition into

two states the only way to ensure Israel's survival — or is it the surest path to ever-increasing bloodshed and possibly even endangering Israel's survival?

Two expert journalists will be in

Reading on March 14 to lay it on the line, one from the right side, the other the left and exchange real solutions for peace. Jonathan S. Tobin, senior online editor and chief political blogger of Commentary Magazine, and J. J. Goldberg, editor-at-large of the *Forward* newspaper and former U.S. bureau chief of the Israeli news magazine *The Jerusalem Report*, will debate these and other critical issues concerning the State of Israel.

Join us for an interactive conversation on Israel with Tobin and Goldberg on Tuesday, March 14 at 7 p.m. at the JCC. Following a moderated conversation the audience will be able to ask questions at this free event. Questions will be accepted that evening or prior to the event via email to Amanda at amandah@jreading.org.

The event is free, but RSVPs are encouraged to Brenda at Brendas@jreading.org or 610-921-0624.

All Around the Town

Mazel tov to **Betsy and Al Katz** on the birth of their fifth grandchild, Mia Shoshana, daughter of David and Rachael Katz of Newton, Ma.

Mazel tov to **Carole and Michael Robinson** on the engagement of their

son Andrew to Ashley Gensemer.

We love good news about members of our community! Please share it by emailing Marknem@aol.com.

Until next time: Shalom!

THERE'S STILL TIME TO RSVP

PLEASE JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE

LYNN & JEFF DRIBEN

RECIPIENTS OF REFORM CONGREGATION
OHEB SHOLOM'S 6TH ANNUAL

**RUTH & IRVIN BALIS
VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION AWARD**

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2017
COCKTAILS AT 6:00 PM
DINNER AT 7:00 PM

PLEASE MAIL IN YOUR RSVP
CARD BY MARCH 17TH



REFORM CONGREGATION
OHEB SHOLOM

REFORM CONGREGATION
OHEB SHOLOM PRESENTS
*a NEW program on
a NEW date!*



ONEG SPEAKER SERIES



FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 2017
We Finally Have A New President...Now What?

featuring Bernard Whitman. Bernard is a brand & political strategist with over 25 years experience advising some of the world's most powerful leaders, companies, and organizations. He is a frequent television commentator with more than 500 media appearances on networks including CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, ABC, CNBC, and Fox Business. Bernard is the brother of student Cantor Harriet Dunkerley.

SHABBAT SERVICE AT 7:00 PM
SPEAKER/ONEG AT 8:00 PM

Mr. Whitman will present in the Social Hall during the oneg for about 45 minutes. The Speaker Series is for adults only. Babysitting is available for free for children ages 2-8 and tweens ages 9-13 with a reservation by calling the office by Friday, April 14th, 610 375-6034.

Appreciation is extended to Sisterhood for supporting the Speaker Series onegs.

Profiles in Leadership: Betsy & Al Katz

This month we are beginning Profiles in Leadership, a series of articles to help the community get to know board members of the Jewish Federation of Reading and why they actively participate in our community. We hope it inspires you and others to become more involved with our programs and in shaping the future of our Jewish community. This month - Betsy and Al Katz.

Betsy Katz

My father owned a children's clothing store in Pottstown for 47 years. During that time the store was always closed for the High Holy Days, despite the fact that it was a very busy season at back-to-school time. My father put on tefillin and davened every day from his Bar Mitzvah until he was no longer physically able to do so. He had identical twin sisters who were also observant Jews. He was very active in leading fundraising campaigns in Pottstown for the synagogue and Israel.

My mother, one of six siblings, was the ultimate hostess for all Jewish holidays as well as working in the family business. She was active in Sisterhood and Hadassah. She kept a kosher home and made sure that we always had a delicious and full Shabbat dinner. Either my mother or father would attend Shabbat morning services with my older brother, Harry, and me.

My brother and I attended Jewish summer camp and were active in United Synagogue Youth. My brother made aliyah 37 years ago and lives in Efrat, Israel. He has four children and 14 grandchildren, all of whom live in Israel.

While I was reluctant to move back to a small town after graduating from college in Boston, it was meant to be. At a Jewish Federation tennis party I met Al, who grew up in the Boston area.

To me being Jewish means living life every day embodying Jewish values. While it was not always easy, we are very pleased that both of our children were able to be raised in Reading and emerge committed to their Judaism.



Our daughter, Beth Anne, lives in Blue Bell with her husband, Gad, and their two children, Lior and Ella. They are all very active at Tiferet Bet Israel. Our son, David, and his wife, Rachel, live in Newton, Mass., along with their three children, Gabriel, Amalia and Mia, and belong to Shaarei Tefillah congregation.

I have served on the boards of the Jewish Federation, JCC and Keshet Zion Synagogue. I led Junior Congregation services at Keshet Zion for many years. I hope that Reading will continue to be an environment in which children can learn strong Jewish values and where being Jewish is important to them and something of which to be proud.

Al Katz

My mother was one of 10 siblings and raised in a Reform family. My father was one of nine siblings and was raised Orthodox. My maternal grandmother, my parents and a number of other of my mother's family were some of the founders of a synagogue in Medford, Mass., in the 1940s. It still exists in another location.

When we moved to New Jersey, my father's family was close by. My father and one of my uncles were involved with UJA and my AZA chapter helped by collecting the nickel and dime cards in the four- and five-story

walk-up apartments.

My involvements with family, UJA, YMHA (JCC) and attending Shabbat services at the local Talmud Torah helped to instill Yiddishkeit as well as witnessing the birth of Israel and a family member's involvement in supplying Israel with needed items before and during the Israeli War of Independence in 1948.

When I moved to Reading, I joined the JCC for athletics and later became involved with the JCC board, where I held numerous positions. I also became involved with Federation and held numerous positions, including two terms as board chairman. I served on the Keshet Zion board in a number of positions, as well as the president of the Reading B'nai B'rith chapter when the B'nai B'rith Apartments were dedicated in 1979.

I have found the Reading Jewish community to be inclusive and friendly. Being in a small community has its advantages over larger cities. You get to know your community, its members and the pluses and minuses of each. Even though our community has dwindled in numbers over the years, it still has much to offer religiously and socially, and I hope our community members embrace them so we can continue to grow as a community. I see we have a number of younger individuals becoming involved with our synagogues and community activities, and I wish them the same success and self-satisfaction that I have experienced over the years.

18 Years of Giving?

Claim your membership in Federation's new Silver Circle Society

The Jewish Federation of Reading is establishing the Silver Circle Society to honor a special group of donors. Anyone, no matter the size of their gift, who has contributed to Federation Community Campaigns for 18 years or more, will be recognized for their dedication and long-term support.

The Silver Circle Society acknowledges our long-term donors for leading the way. Their gifts are one of the many reasons our community has a strong Jewish present and a hopeful Jewish future. Silver Circle donors come from all backgrounds. They have an amazing passion for the Jewish community. Each member has a distinct personal story about why they choose to support Federation. The Silver Circle Society will recognize and thank each of these donors for their dedication to tzedakah, enriching lives for Jews here in Berks County, in Israel and around the world.

If you have been contributing to Federation (here or elsewhere) for at least 18 years, you belong in the Silver Circle. There is no minimum annual gift amount required to be a member of the Silver Circle. Contributions made to a local Federation campaign prior to moving into our community can be included toward the 18 years of annual gifts.

We look forward to hearing from you and thanking you for leading the way. Add your name to the list of Silver Circle donors whose commitment has enriched lives and helped us accomplish so much.

You can become a Silver Circle Society member by filling out the form below and returning it to Federation. You can also let us know by sending an email to brendas@jfreeding.org or registering online at www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org.

Return to: JFR Silver Circle PO Box 14925 Reading, PA 19612

YES, I/we have contributed to Federation Campaigns (here or elsewhere) for at least 18 years. Please add me to the Silver Circle Society.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Best Phone _____ Birthday ___ / ___ / ___ Best Email _____

My first campaign gift was in 19__.

PJ Library update

By Amanda J. Hornberger

On Feb. 5 we were honored to have Tracy Newman, Engagement Officer from PJ Library come to Reading for a site visit. The main purpose for Tracy's visit was to speak with families participating in our Shabbat B'yachad program, which is funded through an engagement grant from PJ Library.

Our Shabbat B'yachad program gathers young families (many of which receive PJ Library books) and has them meet for bi-monthly dinners in homes. The goal is to help engage young Jewish families, and so far the participants are really enjoying the

program and getting to know one another. And the kids love the dinner play dates! We hope to continue and expand the Shabbat B'yachad program next year, so if you are interested in participating please contact Amanda.

Tracy also stayed for the PJ Library kids yoga program which was a big hit for the kids and parents! Our next PJ Library program is our Purim Carnival being held at the JCC on Sunday, March 12, at 4 p.m. This year's Purim Carnival features magician Eddy Ray followed by carnival-style dinner. Free tickets will be given to children who come in costume!

Tot Shabbat and PJ Library at the Highlands

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Kids through grade 2 are invited to join Rabbi Michelson and PJ Library of Reading for Tot Shabbat at the Highlands on Saturday, March 25, at 10 a.m. Tot Shabbat is a fun way for children to learn about Shabbat and includes music and

stories. A pint-sized Oneg will follow.

Highlands residents as well as grandparents are invited to join the fun! All children are welcome! This event is free courtesy of PJ Library of Reading which is generously supported by the Sue B. Viener Memorial Fund.

PJ Library by the numbers

- 85** Children receiving PJ Library books in Reading
- 10 million** PJ Library has delivered 10 million books in the United States and Canada
- 118,000** Current PJ Library subscribers nationally
- 278,000** Tzedakah boxes sent to PJ Library subscribers since 2014
- 12** PJ Library is available in 12 countries
- 45,819** Parents who chose a "Your Turn" Parent book from PJ Library in Summer 2016
- 18,000** PJ Our Way subscribers nationally (kids 9-11)



Expert on antisemitism 13th annual Yashek Memorial Speaker

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Despite the many advances our world has made, antisemitism continues to be an issue in 2017. This year's Yashek Memorial Lecture speaker, Mark Weitzman, is an expert on the issue and will bring his up-to-the-moment current perspective on national and global anti-Semitism to Reading on March 7 at 7:30 p.m. at the Wachovia Theatre at Albright College.

Weitzman is Director of Government Affairs and of the Task Force against Hate and Terrorism for the Simon

Wiesenthal Center. He is also the Chief Representative of the Center to the United Nations in New York.

Weitzman also travels the globe as a member of the official U.S. delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Authority, where he chairs the Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial, and as a member of the advisory panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. He also co-chairs the Working Group on International Affairs of the Global Forum

on antisemitism.

During his lecture entitled "Confronting Holocaust Denial and Distortion in Today's World," Weitzman will explore the history of antisemitism and the Holocaust, and antisemitism throughout the world and United States in 2017.

Thanks to the generous support of Rosalye Yashek and her daughters in memory of their husband and father, Richard, the Richard J. Yashek Memorial Lecture is in its 13th year of bringing distinguished scholars from across the country to Albright College to discuss

Holocaust-related topics. We are honored to have such an international expert deliver this year's lecture!

The Richard J. Yashek Memorial Lecture is free and open to the public and begins at 7:30 p.m. on March 7 in the Wachovia Theatre at Albright College. The Wachovia Theatre is conveniently located in the Center for the Arts on Albright College's campus. For directions or additional information please call the Lakin Holocaust Library & Resource Center at 610-921-7214 or email hrc@albright.edu.



Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom invites you to
First Night Community Seder:
Monday, April 10, 2017, 6:00 pm

Food Provided by:
Boscov's Ala Carte Catering

Adults: \$ 35.00
Children (6-13 years): \$ 20.00
Children 5 & under: FREE

Hoping to see all of you as we gather together as a community to share our Seder Meal!

MENU: Matzo Ball Soup, Gefelte Fish, Horseradish, Matzah, Harosset, Hard Boiled Eggs, Wine, Juice, Seder Plate, Turkey with Matza Stuffing on the side, Baked Salmon w/ Mango Salsa, Roasted Red Potatoes, Green Beans Almandine, Passover Desserts, Decaf, Coffee, Tea

If financial assistance is necessary, please contact Sari Incledon at Jewish Family Service 610-921-2766.

NO RESERVATIONS will be accepted after Friday, March 31.

Please send completed reservation form & check made payable to RCOS: 555 Warwick Drive; Wyomissing, PA 19610.
RSVPs and payment due to the RCOS Office by Friday, March 31, 2017.

of Adults: _____ x \$35.00/each = _____ Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

NAMES (first & last): _____

of Children (6-13) _____ x \$20.00/ea.ch= _____ # of Children (0-5) _____ (need high chair?) yes _____

NAMES (first & last): _____

TOTAL # ATTENDING: _____ TOTAL PAYMENT = _____

Please indicate any seating preferences: _____

Date: April 11, 2017
Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom
Address: 555 Warwick Drive Wyomissing, PA 129610



Second Night Community Passover Seder

Come experience the Exodus!
Journey guided by
Rabbi Matthew Abelson

Catered by Boscov's Ala Carte Service Caterers
Cost: Adults- \$35/Children (6-13) \$20/Children 5 & under free

Vegetarian entree available upon request with reservation and payment. **RSVP required and must be sent to Keshet Zion on or before March 31, 2017.**
In need of transportation? Call KZ - In need of financial assistance? Call Sari Incledon at Jewish Family Services 610-921-2766.



Keshet Zion Synagogue
P.O. Box 14112
Reading, PA 19612
Phone: 610-374-1763
Fax: 610-929-0886
E-mail: kzsecretary@entermail.net

I/we will be attending the Wednesday Second Night Seder on April 11, 2017

\$35 each Adult # _____
\$20 each child # _____
Children under 5 free # _____
Vegetarian # _____

NAME: _____
PHONE: _____
TOTAL # ATTENDING: _____

RSVPs and payment are due to the Keshet Zion Office by Friday, March 31, 2017

Youth News

Tu B'Shevat celebration at Jewish Community High School

By Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner
Jewish Community High School

Tu B'Shevat is the 15th of Shevat, and JCHS teens and seniors celebrated this ancient calendar date by reviewing a Talmudic legend, the story of Honi the Circle-Maker. This was a continuation of a Hevruta – Shared Inter-generational study program.

The Talmud records the following legend: Once while Hone HaMa'agal (the circle-maker) was walking down the road, he saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi asked, "How many years will it take for this tree to bear fruit?" The man answered that it would take 70 years. Honi said, "Are you so healthy that you expect to live that long to enjoy its fruit?" The man answered, "I found a fruitful world, because my forebears planted for me. Thus I shall do for my children." (BT Ta'anit 23a)

We discussed the meaning of the Honi saga from our different age and experience perspectives: A grandparent "should plant" for the next generation; in comparison with the mindset of a young person inheriting what was planted for us by a previous generation. We had a chance to discuss what we "inherited" respectively from previous parents and grandparents, and we considered how different the world was 50 years ago, and today.

This led ultimately to a general discussion of farming and literal planting, which is another feature of this holiday, originally a day of determining the taxes on fruit and nut trees.

Rabbi Dov shared an article that described five of Israel's most famous trees published for Tu B'Shevat, "Five of Israel's must-see trees." Each partner had an opportunity to select which tree was the most interesting; the majority of them were fascinated by the Methusaleh Palm.

Methuselah is considered to have been the oldest living man in the Hebrew Bible, reaching the esteemed age of 969. It is only appropriate, then, that a date palm that sprouted from a 2,000-year-old seed at southern Israel's Arava Institute for Environmental Studies carries the same name.

During excavations at the site of Herod the Great's palace in Israel in the early 1960s, archaeologists unearthed a small stockpile of seeds stowed in a clay jar dating back 2,000 years. For the next four decades, the ancient seeds were kept in a drawer at Tel Aviv's Bar-Ilan University. But then, in 2005, botanical researcher Elaine Solowey decided to plant one and see what, if anything, would sprout.



Class is in session

"I assumed the food in the seed would be no good after all that time. How could it be?" said Solowey. She was soon proved wrong.

Methuselah is part of a larger project organized by Solowey, and with this success she plans to create a center for the study of ancient, extinct, and endangered seeds. "We want to make sure that endangered plant species don't disappear from Israel's landscape," Executive Director David Lehrer said.

Following study, it's always a good idea to eat — and we then snacked on the traditional species of fruits from the time of the Bible through contemporary Israeli fruit production — enjoyed in "historical blender smoothies."

One of the new fruits Rabbi Dov brought were several "cactus pears" or "cactus figs." It's also known as a "sabrá," a term used to describe a Jew born in Israel. The term is also usually inclusive of Jews born during the period of the establishment of the state of Israel. The word is Arabic and Hebrew. Immigrants to Palestine began using it in the early 1930s. The allusion is to a tenacious, thorny desert plant with a thick hide that conceals a sweet, softer interior, suggesting that even though the Israeli Sabra are rough and masculine on the outside, they are delicate and sensitive on the inside.

What was interesting to all



Rabbi Matt Abelson teaches a class on the origins of Zionism.

was that the cactus is not native to Israel; it was imported 300 years ago from Mexico and the Southwestern U.S. to be used as a growing, natural corral for sheep, goats and cattle.

Amazingly, both teens and seniors suggested a really heavy planting of the sabra on the southern U.S. border would be a natural "wall" or fence, and the extra benefit would be the crops of sabra fruit.

We then served smoothies to the other JCHS students and shared the various brochures that Rabbi Dov had prepared for the day.

Origins of Zionism

Rabbi Matt continues to teach his 3rd mini-mester on Israel, responding to student requests to study more about the origins of the modern Jewish State of Israel. "The Origins of Zionism" a history course. We will explore what Zionism is and why it arose in the late 19th century. We will examine the different strands that form Zionism and some of the arguments that were essential to its development in the early 20th century. Lastly, we will ask how the circumstances that enabled Zionism to arise may or may not apply in our contemporary world.

BBYO leader from region earns prestigious honor from organization

Dear Friends of Liberty Region BBYO, Each year BBYO hands out an award at our annual Professional Staff Conference. It is called the "Arnie Weiner Award for Professional Excellence in Furthering the Principles of AZA and BBG". The part of this award that makes it extra special is that the nominations come from the people who are most impacted by our professional staff, the teens.

This year's recipient was our very own Arielle Buxbaum, one of Liberty Region BBYO's Regional Directors. Arielle has

been with Liberty Region for four years and has made a strong difference in our growth and quality of programming, especially in the Philadelphia Metropolitan area. Through Arielle's leadership we have seen strong teen and community development, brand awareness, and new partnerships.

To offer a better understanding of the magnitude of this award, I have included the text below:

As nominated by BBYO's youth leaders annually, a BBYO professional

will receive this award for his or her service and commitment to the values and ideas of AZA and BBG. For decades, AZA and BBG have served as the foundation for BBYO's leadership development experience. Hundreds of thousands of teens have participated in local chapters, experiencing the democratic process while developing the values and skills necessary to excel in positions of leadership that they will encounter throughout their lives.

This award recognizes the legacy of

Arnie Weiner, the Director of Michigan Region from 1969-2008, whose passion and dedication to AZA and BBG made chapter involvement a profound experience for Jewish teens in Michigan and throughout the country.

Please help us in congratulating Arielle on this extremely well deserved recognition!

Jeff Koch and Jenny Oswald
 Regional Director and Associate
 Regional Director
 BBYO Liberty Region

Congregational News

Gala dinner to celebrate 20 years of service at Chabad Center

Chabad Lubavitch of Berks County, and The Jewish Recovery Network will hold a gala dinner to mark 20 years of community service, reflecting on the work that has been done and focusing on future growth in its various activities.

The "Celebrating the Power of Hope" dinner will be held Sunday, March 26, at the Chabad Center, 2320 Hampden Blvd.. A reception will begin at 4 followed by dinner at 5.

Noted radio host and columnist Dennis Prager will be the guest speaker.

During the event, Chabad will honor David Rotenberg with its

Community Service Award; Dr. Jerome Marcus with its Pillar of the Community Award; and Sandy Solmon with its Community Leadership Award. Each of them has contributed in various ways to support a shared mission of helping people and providing Jewish educational programs and services, as a means of providing a springboard towards a meaningful life, and ensuring the continuity of the Jewish community, and the Jewish people as a whole.

The event will focus on "the power of hope" – a principle that has guided Chabad, the Jewish Recovery Network and the thousands they have assisted and supported

throughout the years.

Please RSVP by March 18 either by mail or at www.celebratinghope.org.

There is a \$180 covert charge for this event, and formal attire is requested.

Rabbi Yosef Lipsker and his wife, Chana, began their work in Reading in 1997 when he assumed the rabbinate at Congregation Shomrei Habrith. They have devoted much of their efforts to tending to the spiritual needs of people recovering from substance abuse. The Lipskers converted the Shomrei Habrith building to a Chabad Center in 2009.



Dennis Prager

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND SERVICE TIMES

KESHER ZION SYNAGOGUE (610) 374-1763

Weekly services Saturdays: 9:30 a.m.; Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.
SERVICES HELD AT JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125, Wyomissing

REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM (610) 375-6034

Friday, March 1: 6 p.m. Fridays, March 10, 24 and 31: 7:45 p.m.

Rock Shabbat — Friday, March 17 at 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 25: Intergenerational Tot Shabbat at The Highlands, 10 a.m.

CHABAD CENTER OF BERKS COUNTY (610) 921-0881

Saturday mornings: 9:30 a.m.; Friday evenings: 6:30 p.m.

CONGREGATION SHOMREI HABRITH

March ☆ Adar - Nisan



Shabbat Candle Lightings



Torah Portions

March 3
5:40 p.m.

March 4/Adar 6
Terumah (Exodus 25:1 – 27:19)

March 10
5:47 p.m.

March 11/Adar 13
Tetzaveh (Exodus 27:20 – 30:10)

March 17
6:55 p.m.

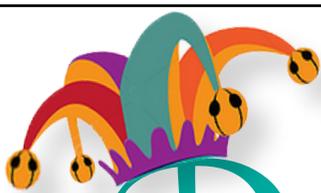
March 18/Adar 20
Ki Tisa (Exodus 30:11 – 34:35)

March 24
7:02 p.m.

March 25/Adar 27
Vayak'hel-Pekudei (Exodus 35:1 – 40:38)

March 31
7:09 p.m.

April 1/Nisan 5
Vayikra (Leviticus 1:1 – 5:26)



Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom
Presents the 2nd Annual

Purim Spicel

Open to the entire Jewish community

Saturday, March 11 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm
RSVP by March 3

RCOS players retell the story of Esther as a dinner show

\$6/person for vegetarian lasagna dinner
(\$1 of which will be given as tzedakah to Mazon)

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom
555 Warwick Drive
Wyomissing, PA 19610

610.375.6034
temple.office@ohebsholom.org
ohebsholom.org

a production of Temple Rodeph Torah

ROCK SHABBAT

Friday, March 17th
at 7:00 pm with special Wine & Cheese Oneg

SAVE THE DATE & BE MOVED!

Cantor Joanna Alexander
Eric Komar, guitarist & songwriter
Bruce Cooper, Bass
Kevin Werbel, Drums
Ellie Golden, Piano

Happy Purim
2017
CELEBRATE PURIM 2017

KESHER ZION SYNAGOGUE
SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2017
MEGILLAH READING AT 7:00 p.m.
HAMANTASCHEN, DRINKS,
PRIZES FOR COSTUMES, KARAOKE

SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2017
MEGILLAH READING AT 9:30 a.m.
HAMANTASCHEN & DRINKS



AT THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF READING
1100 BERKSHIRE BLVD. (SUITE 125) WYOMISSING, PA 19610
YOUR RSVP IS APPRECIATED 610-374-1763 - KZSECRETARY@ENTERMAIL.NET

Religious rapprochement

By Rabbi Matthew Abelson

Keshet Zion Synagogue

When I teach religious school students about the difference between Judaism and Christianity, I tell them that we share one set of books — what Christians call the Old Testament (OT) and Jews call the Tanakh — but the Christians have another set of books called the New Testament.



This rudimentary way of delineating the difference between Christianity and Judaism ignores

several facts. For example, what constitutes the OT is not identical to the contents of the Tanakh. First, the OT includes books, such as Judith, that are excluded from the Tanakh. Second, some of the books that are in the Tanakh and the OT, such as Esther, are different versions of the same basic narrative. Nevertheless, when teaching religious school kids, I still think that presenting the difference between Judaism and Christianity in the fashion I described earlier is appropriate. The reason is that it underlines the commonality between the two religions.

Jews and Christians did not

always see themselves as having much in common. In truth, the last 70 years have been a remarkable period of rapprochement between us. The event that perhaps marks the most significant moment in that rapprochement is the Catholic Church's *nostra aetate* statement issued in 1965 during the Second Vatican Council, which states, "Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God." While this statement may not appear all that flattering, it was revolutionary in that it overturned nearly 2,000 years of Christian hostility toward Jews.

The Jewish-Christian rapprochement was one of the outcomes of the Shoah. While the Nazi regime was anti-Christian, the Christian hostility toward Jews articulated in the Gospels and in Church policy played a foundational role in the hatred that the Nazis took to new extremes. In short, only after the horrors of the Shoah were Christians capable of re-evaluating some of their most basic convictions.

We must remind ourselves of this history for two reasons: 1) we cannot take the era in which we live for granted. The friendly Jewish-Christian relations that are part of the fabric of our lives is a new phenomenon; 2) we should not despair over the generally poor state of Jewish-Muslim relations. Just as our ancestors would have had trouble imagining the friendly relations we enjoy today with our fellow Christians, so too we hope, our descendants will recall our present relations with Muslims as a bygone time. Of course, bright spots exist. In Reading, the Jewish community has enjoyed friendly relations with the Muslim community through the strong leadership of individuals from both communities.

We cannot ignore the fact,

however, that of all the countries in the world, anti-Semitic attitudes are most deeply ingrained in nations of the Islamic world. The Anti-Defamation League reported in May 2014, "The 16 countries with the highest index scores of anti-Semitic views are all in the Middle East and North Africa." The recent discussion between President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu about a regional solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict betrays that — as much as Israel, in its wisdom, has avoided framing the conflict as one between Israel and Islam — the unwillingness of 18 of the 21 member states of the Arab League and an additional 10 of the 57 states in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to recognize Israel is elemental to the crisis within Islam. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not merely a conflict between two nations over one piece of land. Otherwise, it would have been resolved by now.

Recent executive orders by President Trump have brought many Jews to the side of Muslims because of our conviction that the executive order is an outcome of religious bias. These efforts may play a role in the longed for Jewish-Muslim reconciliation. When we partner with Muslims for such purposes, however, we should take the opportunity to make clear our interests.

Diminishing anti-Semitism in the Muslim world, gaining full international recognition of Israel, and eradicating the role of radical Islam in the perpetuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are crucial steps toward a Jewish-Muslim rapprochement. The reality of Jewish-Christian rapprochement should hearten us as we pursue a Jewish-Muslim rapprochement, but we should hope that the paths toward these respective rapprochements are as different as day and night.

Introduce your child to the joy of Shabbat!

Tot Shabbat

is a musical, story-filled, interactive hour for children through grade 2. Bring your family & friends to celebrate with Rabbi Michelson and stay for a pint-sized oneg of juice, challah, fruit, and child-friendly treats.

Join us next time on Mar. 25th at 10 am for an Intergenerational Tot Shabbat at The Highlands 2000 Cambridge Ave. Wyomissing



Members and non-members are invited. No registration is required. Tot Shabbat services are held Saturday mornings at 10:00 am at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing unless noted. Please call the Temple office with any questions, 610.375.6034.

UPCOMING DATES: April 22 & May 13

נדרג

PLEASE JOIN US FOR KESHER ZION'S 2017 PASSOVER CELEBRATIONS

Monday, April 10:	Fast of the First Born Siyyum service at 8:00 a.m. at JFR followed by light breakfast
Tuesday, April 11:	KZ Passover Festival Services and kiddush at 9:30 a.m. at JFR KZ Second Seder at RCOS at 7:00 p.m. Conducted by Rabbi Abelson No 7:30 p.m. Minyan at JFR
Friday, April 14:	Combined Shabbat Evening Services at RCOS 6:00 p.m. KZ sponsored Shabbat Passover Dinner at 7:00 p.m. Everyone invited. Reservations (required) to KZ office before March 31, 2017 See additional flyer for reservation information
Saturday, April 15:	Shabbat Services at JFR 9:30 a.m.
Monday, April 17:	KZ Passover Services at JFR 9:30 a.m. followed by Kiddush
Tuesday, April 18:	KZ Passover Services at JFR 9:30 a.m. including Yizkor and Kiddush

Shabbat Dinner

Celebrate Shabbat with friends and family

Join **KESHER ZION SYNAGOGUE** on **Friday, April 14, 2017** for **Shabbat Services at 6:00p.m. with RCOS** and/or **Shabbat Dinner at 7:00p.m.**

*Cost: \$27.00 / Adult
\$15.00 / Child 6 to 13
(Children 5 and under Free)*

Vegetarian entrée available upon request with reservation only (same price)

RSVP by March 31, 2017

If you are in need of transportation to the Shabbat Dinner or Service, please contact the KZ Office (610) 374-1763.

RESERVATION FORM: SHABBAT PASSOVER DINNER

I/We will be attending Friday, April 14, 2017 for Passover Dinner at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing, PA 19610. We are returning this reservation form with our check made payable to Keshet Zion Synagogue, P.O. Box 14112, Reading, P.A. 19612

RSVP by: March 31, 2017

\$27.00 x each adult	_____	\$ _____
\$15.00 x each child	_____	\$ _____ (Children 5 and under Free)
\$Total	_____	\$ _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Gardening with Vicky

Last year's garden still paying dividends

By Vicky Sokoloff

Fruits and vegetables eaten straight from the garden have flavor that is beyond comparison. But many things can be preserved for use when the garden is buried in snow. Herbs are easy. Most can be simply washed and frozen in sandwich bags. This method is perfect for parsley, bay leaves, oregano, thyme, and many others.

I also dry lime basil, bay leaf, oregano, sage and thyme. Last year I made my first attempt at lavender oil and was very pleased with the result. Lavender can also be dried to use in sachets for drawers and closets.

Plum tomatoes can be quartered and frozen. They make a tasty addition to soup, stew or sauces. Tomato sauce can be canned or frozen. My favorite way to keep eggplant is to slice and roast it slightly before freezing. It can later go into the oven with sauce and cheese for a quick side dish. We are still using beans, leeks and snow peas frozen last fall.

My favorite use for peppers is to stuff them, bake about half way. They are then frozen and the baking finished when they are defrosted. Garlic and onions should be hung to dry. Garlic can also be roasted and then frozen.

Extra strawberries can be frozen (cut

in half if they are very large) or made into sauce for topping ice cream, pudding, or cake and then frozen. I like the berries best if they are not quite defrosted and still have some texture.

Zucchini is more of a challenge. Its high water content makes it unsuitable for freezing. But zucchini soup and zucchini cake both freeze very well. Making zucchini soup is more of a process than an exact recipe. It is a great way to use up those huge zuccs that hid under a leaf until they were too big for most other uses.

Cut the zucchini in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. I usually peel off about half the skin. Cut into 1-inch

pieces. Brown in a small amount of oil in the pot you will use to make the soup. Throw in a clove or two of garlic when the zucchini is almost brown. Salt lightly and add a bit of white pepper. Add water to cover the zucchini. Bring to a boil. Then add a handful of long-grain rice. Simmer for one hour. Puree with an immersion blender. Adjust seasoning to taste. I like oregano, thyme, and granulated onion, but pick your own favorites. You can eat it or cool and then freeze at this point. To serve, just warm and top with grated parmesan cheese if desired. When reheating frozen soup the texture improves if you add a dash of milk.

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Esther plots a little extra humiliation for Haman at her party.

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A proud grandfather



Herbert Schneider takes part in his granddaughter Maggie Nagle's Coast Guard graduation at the Cape May Coast Guard Station. Maggie is a daughter of Herb's daughter Nancy and her husband, Doug. She will be stationed at Padre Island, Texas. Herb is a World War II veteran of the Mighty Eighth Air Force and 351st Bomb Group.



Join us as Reform Congregation
Cheb Sholom celebrates
Israeli Independence Day
Friday, April 28th at 7:00 pm

The service will be followed
by a Mediterranean Oregi!

We will also be announcing forthcoming
events commemorating Rabbi Michelson's
upcoming rabbinical milestones.

Bethany's Mississippi Delta Bat Mitzvah

This story on Bethany Berger, daughter of Lea Berger and granddaughter of Sam Silberstein, is reprinted with permission from Southern & Jewish. For more on Jewish life in the South, visit us at <http://www.myjewish-learning.com/blog/southern-and-jewish/>

By Rachel Jarman Myers

Bethany Berger lives in Indianola, Miss., and is an active congregant at Hebrew Union Congregation in Greenville, where she recently decided to have a Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

Having never had a ceremony back when she was 13, she and Rabbi Matt Dreffin worked together to prepare for this occasion. And a brilliant bat mitzvah it was!

When I walked into the historic sanctuary, I joined a group of excited and proud participants. Rather than the sometimes awkward, timid and nervous children standing up on the bimah, Bethany skillfully led us through the service, taking moments to reflect on certain prayers and readings and what they meant to her along the way of her Jewish journey. The ceremony felt casual, friendly, and was the most meaningful and sincere Jewish lifecycle events that I have ever been privileged to witness.

There was laughter — especially when Rabbi Dreffin invited Bethany's former colleagues up for an aliyah and six Jewish professionals all had stage fright at the same time, forgetting our lines. There were tears, when Bethany gave her d'var Torah, reflecting on her Jewish journey and the meaning behind having this ceremony in Greenville and the community she now calls home.

I may have cried a little too. Bethany



was a participant on the very first Alternative Spring Break I planned. She was part of the American University Hillel trip that spent a week in Mississippi back in March 2014. It was during that week that she was first welcomed by the congregants of Hebrew Union Congregation, celebrating Shabbat and sharing a meal together. She then went on to serve as their Education Fellow, and now is a full time congregant. She explained how this was a place, in this small Delta town, where she solidified her Jewish identity.

I fondly call her "my prize," my shining example of how having an experience in Mississippi can be transformative— so transformative that she chose to make this place her home! I'm so proud not only for the work she put into learning to chant Torah, but for the community she has created around her and the celebration she inspired in an authentically Southern and Jewish space. Congratulations on your brilliant Bat Mitzvah, Bethany!



Junior Youth Kallah

Children from Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom traveled to Camp Harlam for Junior Youth Kallah, preparing them for activities in the National Federation for Temple Youth when they reach high school.

Please join Chabad Lubavitch of Berks County as we celebrate
The Power of Hope at our

20th Anniversary Gala Dinner

Sunday, March 26, 2017
Adar 28 5777

Guests of Honor



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Dr. Jerome Marcus
Pillar of the Community Award



Sandy Solmon
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Dinner at five o'clock

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By mail, or online at ww.celebratinghope.org

Celebrating The Power of Hope

With the help of our partners and supporters, we continue to provide hope, and transform lives; From the depths of despair, to the heights of joy and meaning. Each and every day we strive to unleash the power of hope.

"I had been neglecting my family for years, but when I walked into the Rabbi's home, something clicked inside me. Suddenly I missed them." - Justin T.

"There was so much uncertainty throughout this struggle, yet somehow, after I hung up the phone with the Rabbi, I knew it would be alright." - Brian C.

"There was something magical at that Shabbat table. I felt like I belonged to something. It's hard to describe. I think it was the first time I felt proud to be Jewish" - Sara F.

Dennis Prager Featured Guest Speaker



Dennis Prager is one of America's most influential thinkers. His daily three-hour nationally syndicated radio talk show is listened to by millions of Americans across the United States, and millions more abroad. He is also a syndicated columnist and a New York Times bestseller that has authored six books.

His latest project is the internet-based Prager University which produces courses that provide a convincing, rational and sophisticated alternative to much of what is taught at contemporary universities. In 2016 alone, Prager University's courses had over 220 million views worldwide.

Dennis Prager is also a world renowned defender of Israel. He uses his syndicated show, published writings, speaking engagements, television appearances and university debates as platforms to spread his Pro-Israel message. His Prager University video which accurately explains the Middle East Conflict has been seen by over ten million people worldwide.

Jewish Family Service

Cancer genetics in the Jewish family

United
Way



By Sari Incledon, M.Ed.

Jewish Family Service, partnering with Breast Cancer Support Services of Berks and Reading Health System's McGlinn Cancer Institute will offer a free program, Cancer Genetics in the Jewish Family on Sunday April 2 at 2 p.m. at the JCC. The program will be



presented by Melissa Rosen, Director of National Outreach at Sharsheret, with the goal of helping members of our community make informed choices.

Sharsheret is the only national not-for-profit organization supporting Jewish women and their families facing breast and ovarian cancer and addressing the unique concerns of the Jewish family. Its mission is to offer a community of support to women of all Jewish backgrounds, diagnosed with breast cancer or at increased genetic risk, by fostering culturally-relevant

connections with networks of peers, health professionals and related resources. The word "sharsheret" is Hebrew for chain, symbolizing the connections the organization makes among women, families and communities facing breast and ovarian cancer. One in 40 Jews of Ashkenazi descent carries a mutation in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene compared with 1 in more than 400 in the general population. Sharsheret educates both the cancer and Jewish communities about that risk. Sharsheret serves everyone who reaches out for help. All programs serve women and men and more than 15 percent of those helped were not Jewish.

Our April 2 "Cancer Genetics" program will be Sharsheret's first presentation in our area. All are welcome. The program is free, but reservations are requested. (Call JFS at 610-921-0624).

Help with Tax Preparation

This is the time of year when many of us are concerned about completing tax returns. Many senior citizens and low- to-middle income families (generally \$60,000 or less) cannot afford to hire an accountant to assist with completing their taxes. We are fortunate that our area has two non-

profits (Berks Encore and BCAP) that have the VITA program — Volunteer Income Tax Program.

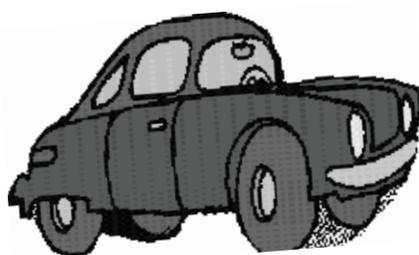
The VITA volunteers can prepare federal, state and local tax forms as well as property tax and rent rebate forms. They can also direct applicants for help on PACE/PACENET applicants.

Berks Encore centers in Fleetwood, Mifflin, Reading, Strausstown and Wernersville staff this program. Appointments can be made by calling 610-374-3195 Ext. 209. Appointments will be made through April 14.

Berks Community Action Program, 645 Penn Street, Reading will for the 12th straight year offer the VITA program as well. It takes appointments on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays until April 14. To make an appointment with BCAP for tax help, call 610-376-6571. Some evening hours will be available.

When you arrive for your VITA appointment, it is important that you bring along the proper documentation. Without it, your VITA volunteer cannot complete the process. It is important to bring all required documents. See publication IRS 376B and check out "what to bring" or call Sari at JFS — 620-921-0624 for this information.

Enjoy Tax Benefits While Contributing to Jewish Family Service Vehicle Donation Program



Call Sari at 610-921-0624,
e-mail sari@jfreading.org
or go to
www.charitableautoresources.com

Jewish Family Service Food Pantry Collection



We are serving more families each month! Please bring donations of canned tuna, soup, fruits and vegetables to Keshar Zion or the JCC. Thank you!

We also need plastic and paper grocery bags!

New leader discusses JDC's importance

After serving 10 years as the youngest dean of Columbia Law School, David Schizer, 48, has formally assumed his new duties as CEO of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the Jewish community's global humanitarian aid program. Schizer, a Brooklyn native, has a law degree from Yale and clerked for Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the Supreme Court. He headed a \$353 million capital campaign at Columbia, doubling its traditional fundraising and expanding its faculty.

New York Jewish Week interviewed Schizer in person and by phone.

What motivated you to leave your post at Columbia and take the helm of JDC?

I have long felt a need to pay back to the community. I'm named for an orphaned grandfather who fled pogroms and the violence of the Russian Revolution in Ukraine. He took his two younger siblings with him and came to America to make a new life. I'm proud to be part of JDC's work, which has never been more important, so I can repay my grandfather for all he did for me.

What are JDC's priorities at this time?

Our mission is constant: saving Jewish lives and building Jewish life all over the world. We are especially focused on the former Soviet Union, where many elderly Jews are living on the equivalent of \$2 a day. Without us, many would die. Also, Venezuela looms large. The economy is in free fall and the Jewish community has gone from about 20,000 to 6,700, with growing needs. And of course there is Israel, where about 18 percent of the population lives under the poverty line.

I was surprised at the outset to learn how much we do in Israel, where we are the innovation arm of the government. We do pilot programs, and if they are successful, the government takes it over and scales it up. For example, we now adapt apartments to the needs of residents with disabilities rather than placing them in residential facilities.

As the population of Holocaust survivors decreases with time, how

do you address their needs?

At the end of 2015, there were close to 56,000 survivors in the Former Soviet Union alone. While their numbers decrease, the needs of the aging population increase. We are always working to be more efficient in saving as many lives as possible, providing food, medicine and home care. Some years ago we replaced direct delivery of food packages and began to provide people with cash cards to buy food and medicine. Another mission is to help sustain and develop local Jewish communities, often by making grants to local institutions.

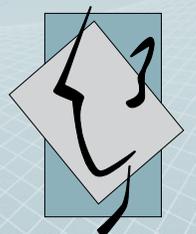
How does JDC manage to reach people in more than 70 countries?

Our budget last year was about \$324 million. About one-third comes from the Claims Conference and Restitution Funds. The JDC board, endowments, foundations and thousands of individual donors make up about \$84 million. Jewish Federations and the government of Israel each provide about \$50 million, and this year, a new four-year \$52 million partnership with the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, will provide for elderly Jews in the FSU. These funds allow us to maintain a staff of about 1,100 people, about half based in Israel, and with offices around the world.

How is JDC planning for the future?

In our work with local communities, one emphasis is on resilience and security. That includes dealing with trauma, offering counseling and training in terms of preventing terror attacks and dealing with their aftermath. We have set aside 15 slots on our board [out of 180] for people in their 20s and 30s who bring their energy and commitment to the table. And we engage millennials through our Entwine program, which catalyzes Jewish identity and a sense of responsibility on a global level. We have 18,000 young Jewish adults involved and this year we will have 700 of them serving communities overseas in short, medium and long-term programs. Young people are drawn to our international humanitarian work, and we believe in building community at home through building community abroad.

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Contributions as of Feb. 17

Sue B. Viener Memorial Fund (PJ Library)

In memory of:
Anne Seltzer – Doris and Elliott Leisawitz
Albert Boscov – George Viener
Eva Bartos – George Viener
Meyer Lewis – George Viener

Jewish Family Service

In honor of:
Al Diamond's special birthday – Shirley Friedman
Judy Schwank being selected the 2017 Agriculture newsmaker of the year – Shirley Friedman

In memory of:

Anne Seltzer – Shirley Friedman
Albert Boscov – Louise Zeidman, George and Marcia Eligman
Sharon Berman's father – Andy and Corinne Wernick

Federation Jewish Community Campaign

In honor of:
Birth of Betsy and Al Katz's new granddaughter, Mia Shoshana – Debbie Goodman and John Moyer, Ellen and Don Abramson

In memory of:

Anne Seltzer – Margie and Alan Leisawitz
Albert Boscov – Cheryl and Eric Farber, David and Debbie Goldberg, Yvonne

Honorials and Memorials

Contributions may be made to the following Funds:

Federation Jewish Community Campaign	\$10
Jewish Family Service	\$10
Leo Camp Lecture Fund	\$10
JFS Food Bank	\$25
JFS Taxi Transportation Program	\$25
Holocaust Library & Resource Center	\$18
Doris Levin Fund	\$10
PJ Library Fund	\$10
Harry & Rose Sack Fund	\$10
Evelyn Thompson Fund	\$10

& Rob Oppenheimer

Rabbi Eliyahu Lipsker (Rabbi Yosef Lipsker's father) – David and Debbie Goldberg

Evelyn Thompson Nursery School Fund (Lakin Preschool)

In honor of:
Alan Seltzer's new grandchild – Andy and Corinne Wernick

In memory of:

Albert Boscov – Andy and Corinne Wernick

Harry & Rose Sack Fund (Adult Programming)

In memory of:
Albert Boscov – Albert and Nancy Sack
Sue Viener – Albert and Nancy Sack

Friendship Circle Fund

In honor of:
Birth of Sue Wilson's granddaughter – Glenn and Gaye Corbin
Birth of Mary Wexler's great-granddaughter – Glenn and Gaye Corbin

Trump welcomes Netanyahu, but what comes next?

By Alan M. Dershowitz

Israel's longtime Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu welcomed to the White House by newly elected President Donald Trump. What can we expect from this initial meeting between two strong-willed national leaders?

I know them both — Netanyahu better than Trump — and I believe they will get along well. They are both non-nonsense pragmatists who understand the relationship between economic development and political progress. We all know of Trump's business background and focus on jobs and trade. Less well-known is Netanyahu's business background. Like Trump, Netanyahu went to business school and began his career as a businessman, working for Boston Consulting Group. When he entered politics, he helped transform Israel from an agrarian-based economy into "start-up nation," which has become a technological superpower with a strong economy. He is the Alexander Hamilton of Israel, to David Ben Gurion's Jefferson. Trump has to admire that.

Trump will also admire Netanyahu's strong nationalism and love of country. He has made Israel great, militarily, technologically and economically. He may soon become Israel's longest serving prime minister, surpassing the legendary Ben

Gurion. Each leader would like to be the one who succeeds in bringing a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. So many others —, people of good will and considerable effort — have been unable to achieve this goal. There is no certainty that Trump and Netanyahu can succeed when so many others have come close but have never been able to close the deal. Both are respected for their deal-making capabilities — Trump in business, Netanyahu in domestic politics.

But there are considerable barriers to achieving a peaceful resolution. Netanyahu and his Palestinian counterpart, Mahmoud Abbas, each have domestic constituencies that would oppose the compromise necessary to achieve a two-state solution. Some of Netanyahu's right-wing coalition partners oppose a two-state solution in which Israel would turn over most of the West Bank to establish a Palestinian state. And many West Bank Palestinians — not to mention Hamas in Gaza — oppose recognizing the legitimacy of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people. They also demand the "return" of millions of Palestinian refugees to Israel, despite the reality that there are probably only a hundred thousand or so actual refugees who themselves left Israel in 1948-1949,

many voluntarily. It must be remembered that Israel has twice in recent times offered the Palestinians a state on 95 percent of the West Bank. In 2000-2001, then Prime Minister Ehud Barak and then President Bill Clinton made a generous offer. Yasser Arafat, who was being advised by Jimmy Carter, rejected it and started a violent intifada, in which more than 4000 people were killed. Then in 2008, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made an even more generous offer, to which Mahmoud Abbas did not respond. And in 2005, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon unilaterally ended the military occupation and settlements in the Gaza Strip, only to be greeted with thousands of rocket attacks and terror tunnels from Hamas.

Much has changed since these Israeli offers and actions. The current Israeli government is not likely to offer more than what was rejected by the Palestinians. So the pressure must now be placed on the Palestinian leadership to make good faith counter-offers. That pressure can only come from the United States. This is so because the rest of the international community — the United Nations, the European Union, the courts in The Hague, the BDS movement — all disincentivize the Palestinians from making compromises, by falsely telling them they can get a state

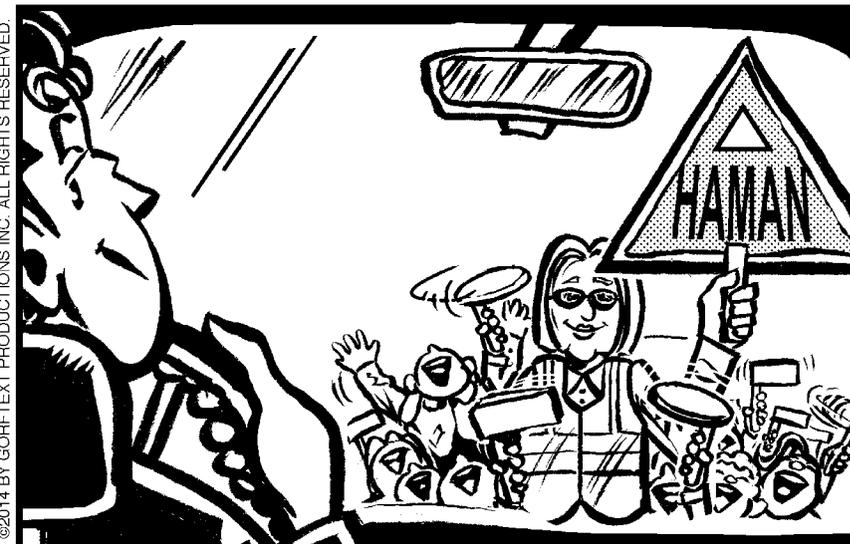
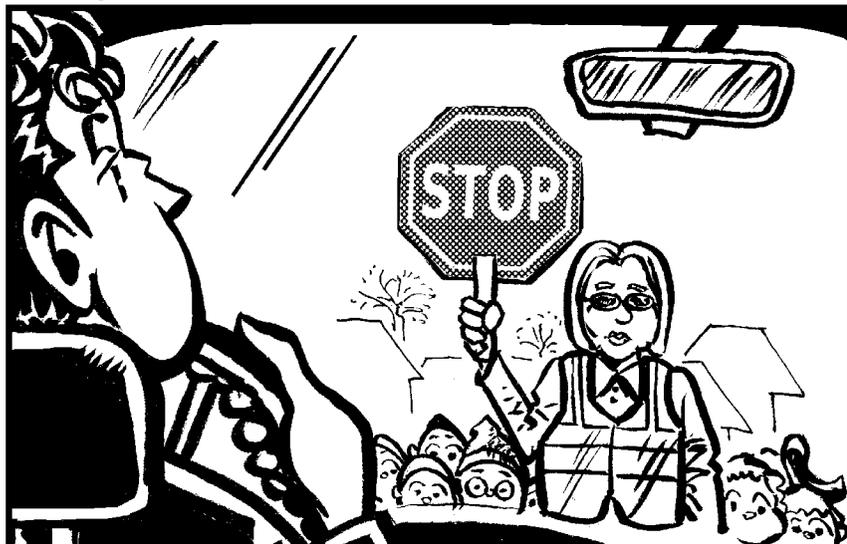
without negotiating with Israel. President Trump must make it crystal clear that unless the Palestinians negotiate a reasonable solution with Israel, they will never have a state. President Barack Obama did not send that message with clarity, especially when he ordered his United Nations Representative to allow a one-sided anti-Israel resolution to be passed by the Security Council.

President Trump must reassure Prime Minister Netanyahu that he will apply pressure — perhaps through our Sunni allies — on the Palestinian Authority, and not only on Israel, as the Obama Administration did. History shows that American administrations that really have Israel's back — not to stab, but to support — are more likely to persuade Israel to offer compromises.

So, I hope that Netanyahu emerged from the White House meeting with the confidence in American support to stand up to those in his cabinet who oppose the two-state solution and who want to expand settlement activity. And I hope the Palestinian leadership will understand that they have no option other than to accept the Netanyahu offer to negotiate anywhere, anytime, and with no preconditions. Perhaps then we will finally see a reasonable resolution to the age-old conflict.

EVERYTHING'S RELATIVE

by Jordan B. Gorfinkel • www.jewishcartoon.com



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How a pro-Palestinian reporter changed his views on Israel

By Hunter Stuart

JPost.com

In the summer of 2015, just three days after I moved to Israel for a year-and-a-half stint freelance reporting in the region, I wrote down my feelings about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A friend of mine in New York had mentioned that it would be interesting to see if living in Israel would change the way I felt. He probably suspected that things would look differently from the front-row seat, so to speak.

Boy was he right.

Before I moved to Jerusalem, I was very pro-Palestinian. Almost everyone I knew was. I grew up Protestant in a quaint, politically correct New England town; almost everyone around me was liberal. And being liberal in America means you support pluralism, tolerance and diversity. You support gay rights, access to abortion and gun control.

The belief that Israel is unjustly bullying the Palestinians is an inextricable part of this pantheon.

"I believe Israel should relinquish control of all of the Gaza Strip and most of the West Bank," I wrote on July 11, 2015, from a park near my new apartment in Jerusalem's Baka neighborhood. "The occupation is an act of colonialism that only creates suffering, frustration and despair for millions of Palestinians."

During my first few weeks in Jerusalem, I found myself constantly getting into arguments about the conflict with my roommates and in social settings. Unlike waspy New England, Israel does not afford the privilege of politely avoiding unpleasant political conversations.

During one such argument, one of my roommates — an easygoing American-Jewish guy in his mid-30s — seemed to be suggesting that all Palestinians were terrorists. I became annoyed and told him that only a small minority supported terrorist attacks. My roommate promptly pulled out his laptop, called up a 2013 Pew Research poll and showed me the screen. I saw that Pew had done a survey of thousands of people across the Muslim world, asking them if they supported suicide bombings against civilians in order to "defend Islam from its enemies." The survey found that 62 percent of Palestinians believed such acts were justified. And not only that, the Palestinian territories were the only place in the Muslim world where a majority of citizens supported terrorism.

The statistic stuck with me.

Less than a month later, in October 2015, a wave of Palestinian terrorist attacks against Jewish-Israelis began. Nearly every day, an angry, young Muslim Palestinian was stabbing or trying to run over someone with his car. A lot of the violence was happening in Jerusalem, some of it just steps from where my wife and I had moved into an apartment of our own, and lived and worked and went grocery shopping.

At first I didn't feel a lot of sympathy for Israelis. Actually, I felt hostility. I felt that they were the cause of the violence. I wanted to shake them and say, "Stop

occupying the West Bank, stop blockading Gaza, and Palestinians will stop killing you!" It seemed so obvious to me; how could they not realize that all this violence was a natural, if unpleasant, reaction to their government's actions?

It wasn't until the violence became personal that I began to see the Israeli side with greater clarity. As the "Stabbing Intifada" kicked into full gear, I traveled to the impoverished East Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan for a story. As soon as I arrived, a Palestinian kid who was perhaps 13 years old pointed at me and shouted "Yehud!" which means "Jew" in Arabic. Immediately, a large group of his friends who'd been hanging out nearby were running toward me with a terrifying sparkle in their eyes. "Yehud! Yehud!" they shouted. I felt my heart start to pound. I shouted at them in Arabic, "I'm not Jewish, I'm not Jewish!" over and over. I told them that I was an American journalist who loved Palestine. They calmed down after that, but the look in their eyes when they first saw me is something I'll never forget. Later, at a house party in Amman, I met a Palestinian guy who'd grown up in Silwan. "If you were Jewish, they probably would have killed you," he said.

I made it back from Silwan that day in one piece; others weren't so lucky. In Jerusalem, and across Israel, the attacks against Jewish Israelis continued. My attitude began to shift, probably because the violence was, for the first time, affecting me directly.

I found myself worrying that my wife might be stabbed while she was on her way home from work. Every time my phone lit up with news of another attack, if I wasn't in the same room with her, I immediately sent her a text to see if she was OK.

Then a friend of mine — an older Jewish Israeli guy who'd hosted my wife and I for dinner at his apartment in the capital's Talpiot neighborhood — told us that his friend had been murdered by two Palestinians on a city bus not far from his apartment. I knew the story well. I'd interviewed the family of one of the Palestinian guys who'd carried out the attack. His family told me how he was a promising young entrepreneur who was pushed over the edge by the daily humiliations wrought by the occupation. I ended up writing a very sympathetic story about the killer for a Jordanian news site called Al Bawaba News.

Writing about the attack with the detached \ eye of a journalist, I was able to take the perspective that most news outlets wanted — that Israel was to blame for Palestinian violence. But when I learned that my friend's friend was one of the victims, it changed my way of thinking. I felt horrible for having publicly glorified one of the murderers. The man who'd been murdered, Richard Lakin, was originally from New England, like me, and had taught English to Israeli and Palestinian children at a school in Jerusalem. He believed in making peace with the Palestinians and "never missed

a peace rally," according to his son. By contrast, his killers had been paid 20,000 shekels to storm the bus that morning with their cowardly guns. You can still see their faces plastered around East Jerusalem on posters hailing them as martyrs.

Being personally affected by the conflict caused me to question how forgiving I'd been of Palestinian violence previously. Liberals, human-rights groups and most of the media, though, continued to blame Israel for being attacked. Ban Ki-moon, for example, who at the time was the head of the United Nations, said in January 2016 — as the streets of my neighborhood were stained with the blood of innocent Israeli civilians — that it was "human nature to react to occupation." In fact, there is no justification for killing someone, no matter what the political situation may or may not be.

Similarly, the way international NGOs, European leaders and others criticized Israel for its "shoot to kill" policy during this wave of attacks began to annoy me. In almost any nation, when the police confront a terrorist in the act of killing people, they shoot him dead and human-rights groups don't make a peep. Did Amnesty International condemn Barack Obama or Abdel Fattah al-Sisi or Angela Merkel or François Hollande when their police forces killed a terrorist? Nope. But they made a point of condemning Israel.

What's more, I started to notice that the media were unusually fixated on highlighting the moral shortcomings of Israel, even as other countries acted in infinitely more abominable ways. If Israel threatened to relocate a collection of Palestinian agricultural tents, as they did in the summer of 2015, for example, the story made international headlines for weeks. The liberal outrage was endless. Yet, when Egypt's president demolished an entire neighborhood in the Sinai Peninsula in the name of national security, people scarcely noticed. Where do these double standards come from? I've come to believe it's because the Israeli-Palestinian conflict appeals to the appetites of progressive people in the West. They see it as a white, first world people beating on a poor, third world one. It's easier for them to become outraged watching two radically different civilizations collide than it is watching Alawite Muslims kill Sunni Muslims in Syria, for example, because the difference between Alawite and Sunni is too subtle to fit into a compelling narrative that can be easily summarized on Facebook.

I admire the liberal desire to support the underdog. The problem is that their beliefs often don't square with reality.

There's an old saying that goes, "If you want to change someone's mind, first make them your friend." The friends I made in Israel forever changed my mind about the country and about the Jewish need for a homeland. But I also spent a lot of time traveling in the Palestinian territories getting to know Palestinians. I met some incredible people in these places; I saw generosity and hospitality unlike anywhere else I've ever traveled

to. I'll be friends with some of them for the rest of my life. But almost without fail, their views of the conflict and of Israel and of Jewish people in general were extremely disappointing.

Even the kindest, most educated, upper-class Palestinians reject 100 percent of Israel — not just the occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank. They simply will not be content with a two-state solution — what they want is to return to their ancestral homes in 1948 Israel, within the Green Line. And they want the Israelis who live there now to leave. They almost never speak of coexistence; they speak of expulsion, of taking back "their" land.

To me, however morally complicated the creation of Israel may have been, however many innocent Palestinians were killed and displaced from their homes in 1948 and again in 1967, Israel is now a fact, accepted by almost every government in the world (including many in the Middle East). But the ongoing desire of Palestinians to wipe Israel off the map is unproductive and backward-looking, and the West must be very careful not to encourage it.

I know a lot of Jewish-Israelis who are willing to share the land with Muslim Palestinians, but for some reason finding a Palestinian who feels the same way was near impossible. Countless Palestinians told me they didn't have a problem with Jewish people, only with Zionists. They seemed to forget that Jews have been living in Israel for thousands of years, along with Muslims, Christians, Druse, atheists, agnostics and others, more often than not, in harmony. Instead, the vast majority believe that Jews only arrived in Israel in the 20th century and, therefore, don't belong here.

Of course, I don't blame Palestinians for wanting autonomy or for wanting to return to their ancestral homes. But as long as Western powers and NGOs and progressive people in the US and Europe fail to condemn Palestinian attacks against Israel, the deeper the conflict will grow and the more blood will be shed on both sides.

I'm back in the U.S. now, living in a liberal enclave where most people — including Jews — tend to support the Palestinians' bid for statehood. I'm no longer convinced it's such a good idea. If the Palestinians are given their own state in the West Bank, who's to say they wouldn't elect Hamas, a group committed to Israel's destruction? That's exactly what happened in Gaza. Fortunately, Gaza is somewhat isolated, but having them in control of the West Bank and half of Jerusalem is something Israel obviously doesn't want. It would be suicide. And no country can be expected to consent to its own destruction.

Now I don't know what to think. I'm squarely in the center of one of the most polarized issues in the world. I guess, at least, I can say that, no matter how socially unacceptable it was, I was willing to change my mind. If only more people would do the same.

Israelis lead secret operation to deliver coats to refugees in Syria

Refugees in Syria will soon be receiving donated winter supplies — but they won't know that the coats and boots keeping them warm came from Israel, an enemy state.

Any logos or tags featuring Hebrew writing have been removed from the more than 100 tons of supplies collected by three Israeli groups, in order "to protect the effort and the recipients," according to a statement.

The organizers — the Zionist youth movement HaNoar HaOved VeHaLomed, its alumni group Dror Israel

and the Combat Genocide Association — collected about 3,000 boxes of blankets, coats, sleeping bags, gloves, boots and other winter supplies as part of an initiative dubbed "Operation Human Warmth."

The items have been taken to a collection point, a representative confirmed to JTA. From there, a partner aid organization is facilitating the delivery of the goods to the refugees, who won't know their country of origin. The representative said the delivery date and method could not be revealed due to the

sensitive nature of the situation.

"I thought people would be reluctant to support an effort they would not get credit for," Gilad Perry, Dror Israel's international collaborations director, said in a statement. "I was amazed to see how wrong I was. The generosity of people just caring for those who suffer from the cold winter on the other side of the border, in an 'enemy country,' overwhelmed me."

This year the initiative, which began in 2014, saw a record number of donations, with supplies collected from Jewish, Arab

and Druze neighborhoods across Israel.

"The most moving part of the operation for me is to see thousands of Israelis from different religions join forces in a humanistic effort, emphasizing the similarities in the core values of all of us who simply try to make good on this planet, no matter what our backgrounds may be," Perry said.

HaNoar HaOved VeHaLomed (Youth Who Work and Learn) is a sister movement of Habonim Dror, long affiliated with the Labor Zionist movement.